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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-01

CEA-01 L-02 H-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 PM-03

FEA-01 INT-05 AGR-05 /093 W
---------- 028016
R 142100Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5340
INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 0271

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT,BL
SUBJ: GOB CRACKDOWN ON LABOR SECTORS
REF: LA PAZ 207, 222

1. ON JANUARY 13, THE GOB CLOSED 4 RADIO STATIONS IN THE MINING AREAS, INCLUDING RADIO PIUS XII, WHICH WAS RUN BY THE OBLATES, A MISSIONARY ORDER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN XAVIER ARCE CHARGED THAT THE STATIONS WERE ENGAGED IN POLITICAL SUBVERSION AND WERE INCITING THE MINERS TO STRIKE. AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF PERSONS WERE DETAINED IN THE ORURO, CATAVI, LLALLAGUA AREA. REPORTS, AS YET UNCONFIRMED, PLACE THE NUMBER ARRESTED BETWEEN 15 AND 50, INCLUDING SOME CLERGYMEN SUCH AS THE PASTOR OF LLALLAGUA. THE MINERS OF CATAVI AND SIGLO HAVE RESPONDED BY DECLARING A 96 HOUR STRIKE.

2. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPORTED THAT ON JANUARY 13 THE POLICE ARRESTED ABOUT 20 PERSONS IN COCHABAMBA INCLUSINGV LEADERS OF THE FACTORY WORKERS AND CAMPESINOS. THE ARRESTS WERE DESCRIBED AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE IN THE FACE OF SUBVERSIVE
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PLOTS BEING BUILT AROUND FALSE RUMORS OF FORTHCOMING ECONOMIC

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MEASURES WHICH MIGHT AFFECT POPULAR LIVING STANDARDS.

3. COMMENT: THE GOB APPEARS TO BE STRIKING PRE-IMPTIVE BLOWS AT KEY AREAS OF POTENTIAL OPPOSITION TOWHATEVER ECONOMIC MEASURES CABINET MAY DECIDE TO ISSUE LATER THIS WEEK OR NEXT. IT WAS WIDELY RUMORED THAT THE MINERS IN THE NATIONALIZED MINES WERE PREPARING TO STRIKE UPON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES WHICH MIGHT REDUCE THEIR INCOME, LIVING STANDARDS, OR EMPLOYMENT. THEY WERE REPORTEDLY EXPECTING TO BE JOINED BY THE FACTORY WORKERS AND EVENTUALLY BY OTHER LABOR SECTORS IN A SHOW OF FORCE SUFFICIENT TO CAUSE A REVERSAL IN GOB LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY. THE GOB ACTION HAS SILENCED THE MINERS' RADIOS, WHICH WERE AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION, AND THE ROUND-UP MAY NET POTENTIALL STRIKE LEADERS FROM AMONG BOTH MINERS AND FACTORY WORKERS. THUS LABOR'S ABILITY TO REACT IF AND WHEN NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES ARE ANNOUNCED WILL BE WEAKENED.

4. THE CLOSING OF RADIO PIUS XII ADDS ONE MORE IRRITANT TO CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS (SEE SEPTEL).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RADIO STATIONS, INFORMATION CONTROL, CLOSURE OF OFFICES, POLITICAL SITUATION, PLOTS, ECONOMIC CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LAPAZ00271
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750014-0769
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750154/aaaabvjk.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LA PAZ 207, 75 222
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
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05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOB CRACKDOWN ON LABOR SECTORS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, BL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006